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CLOSING REMARKS BY U.S. AMBASSADOR JAMES F. MORIARTY

“Higher Education’s Response to Global Challenges”

DHAKA, OCTOBER 8 -- U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty made the following remarks at the Asia Regional Higher Education Summit at Hotel Westin in Dhaka today:

(Begin Text)

Excellencies; Distinguished Vice-Chancellors; Presidents and Rectors of Universities from the region and the United States; my colleagues from the United States Government; senior government officials from the region, respected guests and participants from the private sector and civil society; representatives of the media; ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of my Government, I am delighted to be here for the closing of the Asia Regional Higher Education Summit in Dhaka.

The Summit has opened the next chapter for new partnerships, new networks, and new ideas. This next chapter started with a pledge from participants to support and expand partnerships between various sectors of society to meet the development challenges of the future.

I hope that all participants – from universities, governments, foundations, the private sector and civil society have gained an appreciation for the critical role that higher education institutions play in addressing some of the world’s most pressing development issues. These challenges include those highlighted by this Summit: food security, women’s entrepreneurship, teacher training, and natural disaster management.

I believe that the joint statement issued from this Summit will sustain and broaden our partnership. Through our presence at this Summit, we have all made a commitment to maintain the enthusiasm shown in our many discussions, and to follow up in the days ahead. Working together, I am confident we can make a real difference in improving lives.

There is no question that this Summit has been a great success. The Summit has fostered collegial dialogue, generated innovative approaches and solidified partnerships. Symbolizing this success, I am pleased to announce that the U.S. Government, through the State Department’s

Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, has just authorized five new Fulbright positions for Bangladesh.

We heard the message that food security is a great concern and that higher education is key to developing a solution. These five new Fulbrighters will pursue master's degree programs in the U.S. in the area of food security. We heard, we listened and we acted. I challenge you all to do the same.

I also would like to take this opportunity to recognize other new partnerships and programs created at this Summit. We established the Regional Business Advisory Council for South Asia, the Regional Higher Education Committee, and the Regional Network of Asian Universities.

I would like to recognize Microsoft, Intel and the Qatar Foundation for taking the lead on these three important partnerships. There is no doubt in my mind that these partnerships will produce tangible outputs before the next global Summit, which is planned for 2009.

The United States Government is honored to have had the opportunity to work closely with the two co-hosts of this event: the University of Dhaka and the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

It is a pleasure for me to welcome the Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, S.M.A. Faiz, and the Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, AMM Safiullah, to make closing remarks.

Each one of them has offered tremendous support to this effort. They -- as I -- believe there is so much we can accomplish when we bring together ideas and resources from all sectors in our society towards a common goal.

Again, thank you for your participation. It has been an honor for me to be involved so closely in this very special and important event.

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** As prepared for delivery*

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